



Code Enforcement

Fall 2014

JOIN US!

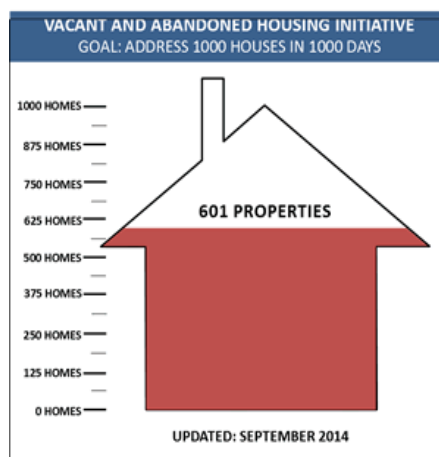
V&A Progress

For the past year, Code inspectors – with support of the Mayor's Office – have led inspections of more than 1,200 V&A properties across the City. This summer, we passed the halfway mark for the 1,000 Houses in 1,000 Days effort!

More than **601** properties have been addressed since February 2013. Kudos to our team that diligently monitors properties, presents information at public hearings and processes outcomes!

Code Enforcement works with a multi-disciplinary city team to enforce the Unsafe Building Law and local ordinances related to vacant and abandoned (V&A) properties. V&A properties are defined as houses that have been unoccupied for more than 90 days and have unaddressed code violations for more than 30 days.

Even after demolition, the City does not own these properties.



Count of Houses:

185 Houses Repaired
270 Houses Demolished
6 CDC Partner Houses
62 State Blight Elimination Program
10 Houses Under Contract for Deconstruction
68 Houses Under Contract for Demolition
601 Total

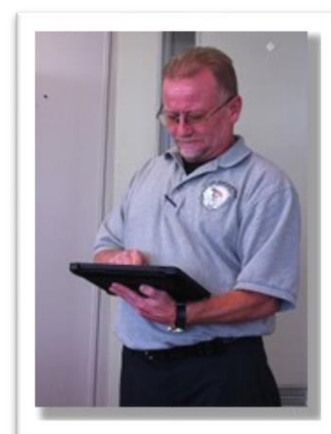
New Openings

With the recent departure of Shubhada Kambli, Code Enforcement is now looking for a new Director! If you are enthusiastic about improving the quality of our City's neighborhoods, are detail-

oriented, and have managerial experience, please visit the City's [website](#) for a detailed job description and application.

Technology

Our inspectors have iPads! Together with the City's SB Stat team, we are accelerating efforts to go paperless in our office by transferring data electronically from the field to our administrative staff.



During the next two months, we will also be implementing our new Accela case management tool, which is a software program used by communities such as Indianapolis to manage Code violations.

Many thanks to SB Stat consultants, the IT department, Mayor's Office and City Council for supporting these efforts.

Introductions

We have two new community liaisons, Trent Spoolstra and Lucy Macfarlane. Trent and Lucy are AmeriCorps-VISTA members funded through a federal program with the Corporation for National and Community Service. They build capacity through initiatives such as the vacant property registry, clover pilot and data management. Please feel free to contact them at 574-235-9486.

Some other new staff include Randy Wilkerson, Chief Code Inspector and Marlaina Reign, Data Analyst. Randy comes to us from Habitat for Humanity in Ohio with an extensive background in construction, and Marlaina worked for the South Bend Community School Corporation and recently graduated from IU South Bend's Master's in Public Administration program.

CONTACT US!

Call 311 or 235-9486 and visit us at the County City building M-F 8:00 am to 4:45 pm. Public hearings are every T / Th at 1:30pm.

CODE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

68%

Decrease in the average number of days a housing case remains active. We're working 68% faster to get housing violations resolved, making the City more appealing to residents and visitors alike.

191%

Increase in the amount billed between 8/31/13 and 8/31/14. We're ramping up efforts to hold people responsible for their properties, starting with increasing the speed and efficiency of our billing and collections.

In the Media

Shubhada Kambli stepped down from her position on October 3rd. During her time with Code Enforcement, she was responsible for many improvements within the Department and was a great asset for the city. Thank you for your service, Shubhada, and good luck with your future endeavors!



Chronic Nuisance Properties In addition to the V&A properties that we track, we also continuously inspect and bring commercial properties to public hearing. There were several issues that made news – for all the wrong reasons:

- **Large Downtown Multiplex.** A team of inspectors will evaluate the situation comprehensively and determine the level of disrepair on interior units. The property owner appeared at a public

hearing on July 29th, 2014, for issues ranging from plumbing to the roof. The repair deadline is October 6th, 2014.

- **Abandoned Brewery.** Almost 138,000 pounds of debris and 177 tires were removed by the illegal dumping crew; the abatement will be billed to the site's owner and a civil penalty will also be imposed. *Due to a new partnership through the City's Legal department, all outstanding debts are sent to a collections firm.*
- **NNN Apartment Complex.** Inspectors are closely monitoring the quality and level of work completion at this vacant apartment complex. The owner has a tentative extension of 90 days and a civil penalty has also been imposed.
- **Downtown Garage.** A team of inspectors evaluated the condition of the site and are issuing a vacate, seal, and repair order for the southeast section of the structure, including the stairwell and elevator.
- **Junk Cars.** The Code team issues tickets for junk vehicles used to advertise businesses. If you see a car parked unlawfully in your neighborhood, please call 311 to alert the team.
- **Keller Park.** The City extensively documented V&A properties in Keller Park, demolished 28 deteriorated houses, and bid out an additional six for demolition. Code is also addressing tall grass issues through a new clover initiative (see page 3).

Upcoming Events

Find us at:

9/27 – Near Northwest Neighborhood Association 1013 Portage Ave. @ 10:00-11:00am. Final Review of the tax credit application for redevelopment of the Ford Building, open to all residents.

10/6 – Far Northwest Neighborhood Association 1800 Fremont St. @ 5:30-7:00pm. Open to all neighborhood residents.

10/8 – Rum Village Neighborhood Association, Rum Village Nature Center 2626 S. Gertrude St. @ 6:00-7:00pm. Open to all neighborhood residents.

10/9 – River Park Neighborhood Association, River Park Library 2022 Mishawaka Ave. @ 6:00-7:30pm. A neighborhood progress report presentation will be provided by the Director of Community Outreach, Cherri Peate, along with AmeriCorps VISTAs. Open to all neighborhood residents.

10/9 – Marquette Park Neighborhood Association meeting, Memorial Methodist Church (on Portage Ave. and Woodlawn Ave.) @ 5:30 pm. Open to all neighborhood residents.

10/14 – Lincoln Way West Gateway Association meeting, LaSalle Library 3232 W. Ardmore St. @ 6:00-7:00pm. Open to all neighborhood residents.

10/16 – South Side Neighborhood Association meeting, Living Stones Church 718 Donmoyer Ave. @ 6:00-7:00pm. Open to all neighborhood residents.

You have a vote!

In partnership with Code for America, the Department launched CityVoice, a groundbreaking community feedback tool. Visit southbendvoices.com for details.

Did you know?

Clover Pilot

Through the V&A initiative, Code introduced the seeding of demolition lots with clover – rather than grass. Since white dutch clover does not grow that tall, this little wonder will help prevent excessive City maintenance in the future, create vital pollinator pathways, and improve our local landscape during times of drought. On October 4th, Code hosted a “Clover Party” with the Keller Park Neighborhood Association in laying clover on 3 vacant lots. We look forward to seeing the clover begin sprouting next spring!



V&A Property Ownership

The City does not own vacant and abandoned properties. Maintaining these blighting eyesores is a team effort. Under the Good Samaritan Law, neighbors of vacant properties have ability to cut grass and secure the property. Code Enforcement is in the early stages of working with groups interested in organizing volunteers across the City to address environmental violations for disabled residents and seniors.

Our talented staff make every effort to track and address problem properties. If there is an issue in your neighborhood that

remains unaddressed, please contact Trent Spoolstra at 574-235-9486.

Do you own a vacant property?

A City ordinance requires property owners to register and maintain abandoned properties. There is a \$50 fee to register; failure to adhere to the requirements of the regulations can result in fines up to \$2,500 – in addition to any civil penalties or amounts already owed on the property. *If you would like to donate your property or need a payment plan for outstanding debts, contact the Department to discuss your situation.*

Resources

In every newsletter, we will highlight resources for residents. This quarter, we'd like to shine a light on: Indiana Foreclosure Prevention Network. Indiana Foreclosure prevention counselors assist homeowners facing hardships that may impact their ability to pay a mortgage. Call 1-877-GET-HOPE or 1-877-438-4673 for more information.

CODE FAST FACTS

24,529

The average number of violations issued every year. 97% of these issues are environmental violations such as tall grass, uncontained trash or yard waste.

48,825

The number of parcels in the City of South Bend. Given our rate of productivity, we generate enough violation notices for one out of every two South Bend properties!

